

**Twenty-eight Parrot with Abnormal Beak.**—I am sending you the head of a Twenty-eight Parrot which was shot near the house. It was feeding in the grass with about half a dozen other parrots. We were surprised to see the abnormal growth of the beak and wondered how it managed to feed itself to grow to maturity. As can be seen the upper part of the beak has curled right under to the throat.

—R. BENSON, "Ferndale," Kirup.

The specimen forwarded, the head of a Twenty-eight Parrot (*Barnardius zonarius semitorquatus*) is illustrated herewith by Mr. H. O. Webster. Similar instances of abnormal growth of the beak are known from various species of birds, the growth being often consequent on injury to the tip of the beak. The interest of the present case is that the abnormality, extreme though it appears to



be, did not prevent the bird from surviving in the wild state, though evidently the bird must have restricted its feeding to items which did not require the use of the tip of the bill.—EDITOR.

**Drinking Habits of Common Bronzewing.**—That Bronzewings (*Phaps chalcoptera*) drink night and morning is well-known to sportsmen and to bushfolk. Likewise the fact that pigeons, unlike most other birds, take a long draught after the manner of a horse is widely known. Gilbert White mentioned this peculiarity of pigeons in his *Natural History of Selborne*. Nevertheless the following observations made at the Bilbarin town dam, may prove of interest.

The birds observed usually alighted in the forest surrounding the dam and walked over the bank and down to the water's edge. When departing in a normal manner the birds usually flew from the edge of the water but occasionally a bird would walk to the top of the bank before taking wing.

The following is a record of birds watched at sunset on January 1 and 2, 1947:

- Bird A.—First draught, untimed; second, 9 seconds.
- Bird B.—First draught, 4 seconds; second, 4 seconds.
- Bird C.—Fed by water. Not seen to drink.

Bird D.—First draught, 4 seconds; second, 3 seconds.  
Stopped between draughts to "bob" to the fifth bird.

Bird E.—First draught, 9 seconds; second, 2 seconds.  
(Birds C, D, and E were at the water's edge simultaneously.)

Bird F.—Took several small drinks.

Bird G.—First draught, 1 second; second, 8 seconds; third, 3. seconds; fourth, 2 seconds.

Bird H.—First draught, 10 seconds; second, 8 seconds; third, 8 seconds.

The watering birds usually showed some signs of agitation and were easily disturbed. They tended to take long draughts, up to ten seconds, but when agitated, e.g., by the arrival or departure of other Bronzewings, shortened the draughts and apparently, in the aggregate took less water.

—ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Leonora.

**A Sea-going Crow.**—In *The Emu*, vol. 49, October 1949, p. 83. A. R. McGill refers to several instances of the Colombo Crow (*Corvus splendens*) accompanying ships on the voyage from Ceylon to Fremantle. Crows are usually associated with the inland and certainly are not considered to be sea-birds, although they are frequently observed on the seashore around such installations as meatworks, shore whale stations, etc., where there is a plentiful supply of offal. Therefore the following observation of an Australian species of crow at sea may be worthy of record.

On November 12, 1948, I was on board the C.S.I.R.O. fisheries research vessel *Warreen* and at 12.10 p.m. a crow flew around the ship and finally landed. The ship at that moment was 16 nautical miles off the North-west coast, in Latitude 23° 33' S.; Longitude 113° 25' E. The weather was clear with a South-west wind, force 2 on the Beaufort scale and had been the same for the previous day. The crow had white feather bases and brown eyes and from its comparatively small size was identified as an immature Little Crow (*Corvus bennetti*).

Earlier in the day we had been doing some experimental shots with a Danish seine net and this was stacked on the after deck with a number of small fish still enmeshed. The bird promptly started to make a meal of these and was not unduly perturbed when members of the crew approached within about 10 feet. It accepted small pieces of turtle meat which were thrown to it and finally allowed itself to be photographed with a movie camera from a range of 6 feet. Occasionally when someone approached too close it would take off and perch on the yardarm but would immediately return to its meal of fish when the person concerned retreated. Almost the whole time the bird was on board it was feeding and must have consumed nearly ½ lb. of fish and turtle meat. At 6.10 p.m. we anchored about half a mile off the north side of Red Bluff and the crow, as if aware it had travelled as far as we were going, took off and flew towards the shore. Had the *Warreen* been steaming west instead of east when it picked up the crow the bird would have almost certainly duplicated the hitch-hiking feat of the Colombo Crows.

—BRUCE SHIPWAY, South Perth.